

blue slips from both Senators BENNET and HICKENLOOPER. Her nomination is also supported by the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the Latinas First Foundation, and the Colorado Lawyers Committee.

She has earned support across the aisle. On May 20, Ms. Rodriguez was voted out of the committee by a vote of 17 to 5, with the support of six of my Republican colleagues.

When confirmed, she will be the first Asian-American judge to serve not only in the District of Colorado but in the entire Tenth Circuit. Her historic, well-deserved confirmation will bring our Federal judiciary closer to reflecting the lives and experiences of all Americans. I urge my colleagues to join me in voting for Ms. Rodriguez's nomination.

The judicial nominees we are voting on this week illustrate something that is substantial and profound. They illustrate that President Joe Biden is dedicated to appointing legal experts with outstanding credentials and a wealth of experience.

During his first several months in office, President Biden has nominated public servants who will bring to the bench a variety of professional perspectives and personal experiences. Too often, those things have been missing in previous nominees. By confirming judges who reflect the experience of all Americans and who demonstrate fealty to the rule of law, we can continue building a justice system that works for everyone.

Over the last 4 years, we have seen a concerted effort on the Republican side to fill vacancies. They broke records, in some respects, in the number of nominees that they brought before the Senate for approval. Some of the records are not ones to be proud of, from my perspective, and 10 of the nominees who were submitted for consideration during the last 4 years before the Senate Judiciary Committee were found unqualified by the American Bar Association. Nevertheless, most of them made it to the bench in lifetime appointments.

Many nominees came before us, of the Trump administration, who were seeking lifetime appointments to become a trial judge and had no personal experience in a courtroom. It is hard to imagine that anyone would be thrust into that situation and expected to perform as a professional. Imagine, if you will, the parties to those lawsuits, many of whom stake their lives and reputations on the outcome, to find a judge who couldn't find their way through the Code of Civil Procedure if they were forced to. That, unfortunately, was the standard that was used. As long as these nominees in the past had the blessing of the so-called Federalist Society, that was good enough for many of my Republican colleagues.

Joe Biden is really responding to that by suggesting nominees who meet much higher standards. I want to work with the Biden administration to con-

tinue in that tradition, so at the end of the day we can fill the vacancies with women and men who are not only competent and honest but have the integrity and experience, both legal and otherwise, to serve our Nation for the rest of their lives, should they choose, in these judicial capacities.

I commend these two nominees who passed out of our committee with a strong bipartisan votes. To my colleagues on the floor today, I hope they will join me in supporting them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

JANUARY 6

Mr. THUNE. Mr. President, let me begin by saying that I am grateful to Senators KLOBUCHAR, BLUNT, PETERS, and PORTMAN and the two Senate committees that they lead for their bipartisan investigation into the events of January 6, and for producing a detailed report in a short amount of time. The report makes clear that there is more work ahead for the committees. More importantly, it also highlights the immense bravery of the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police who defended the Capitol Complex on January 6.

In the coming days, after a thorough review of the 100-page report, I will discuss its recommendations with my colleagues and work to institute reforms that will make a meaningful change to better protect the U.S. Capitol.

BIDEN ADMINISTRATION

Mr. President, on a different topic, in his 1996 State of the Union address, then-President Bill Clinton famously declared: "The era of big government is over."

Well, after taking a look at the Biden budget, it is clear that the era of Big Government is back, and it is bringing Big Government's usual companions: big taxation, big spending, big deficits, and, it seems likely, big inflation.

The Biden budget, which the administration quietly slipped out the door before the holiday weekend, would raise taxes by \$3.6 trillion over 10 years—3.6 trillion. All told, the Biden budget proposes at least 30 separate tax increases, ranging from a hike in the capital gains tax to a hike in the top income tax rate, to a new death tax. And it would raise taxes on middle-class families by allowing the tax relief the Republicans passed in 2017 to expire.

Under the Biden budget, in just a few short years, working Americans could be facing thousands of dollars in higher taxes. All these tax hikes, of course, are an attempt to pay for the Biden administration's new spending.

Under the Biden budget, government spending would exceed \$6 trillion every

year. To put that in perspective, the total—total—Federal budget in 2019 was \$4.4 trillion. An increase to \$6 trillion plus per year—\$8.2 trillion by 2031—is a massive, massive hike in Federal spending.

Over the course of the Biden budget, government spending would equal around 25 percent of our gross domestic product—far exceeding the average of the past five decades for spending, as a percentage of our total economic outlook.

So what would the consequences of all this spending look like? Well, I have already mentioned the \$3.6 trillion in new tax hikes. Another would be the deficits, which would exceed \$1.3 trillion every year for the next 10 years. By 2031, the end of the Biden budget window, our debt would be—get ready for this—\$39 trillion. Our debt would equal 117 percent of the U.S. economy—again, the highest level in our Nation's history, debt to GDP.

The interest payments on the debt would triple over the next 10 years to \$914 billion. That is right. By 2031, we would be paying nearly \$1 trillion a year just in interest on the debt. That is more money than our Nation will spend on Medicare this year.

So let's review. The Biden budget equals taxes, spending, and debt. And here is the real kicker: The Biden budget hikes taxes, hikes spending, and drives up the debt for pretty much nothing. That is right. After an initial good year or two, the Biden budget projects permanently weak economic growth. For a majority of the next 10 years, economic growth wouldn't even hit 2 percent.

All that government spending and debt isn't going to result in prosperity. It is going to result in permanent economic stagnation, and that means permanently diminished opportunities for American families, fewer jobs, lower wages, and weaker career prospects.

Democrats like to talk as if government can provide security and salvation. But the truth is, government is not an engine of prosperity. Government might serve as a safety net in difficult circumstances, but government will never make you prosperous. It is a robust economy, not a robust government, that would produce prosperity, that would produce the good jobs and good salaries and good benefits and good careers.

That is why one of the most important jobs of government is creating the conditions that will allow the economy to flourish. That is what Republicans worked to do with the tax relief that we passed in 2017. And, as we saw before the pandemic hit, it was working.

The Biden budget, on the other hand, focuses on creating a flourishing government, and the economy would pay the price. And working Americans would face a future of diminished earnings and reduced opportunity.

There is a lot more that could be said about the Biden budget. I haven't even mentioned the diminished investment

in our national defense, which could have very serious consequences for our national security.

Less than 3 years ago, the bipartisan National Defense Strategy Commission released a report warning—warning—that our readiness had eroded to the point where we might struggle to win the war against a major power like Russia or China. And while we have made some real progress since then, we still have a lot of work to do to ensure that our military is prepared to defend our Nation and meet the threats of the 21st century. The Biden budget would send us right back to the situation that we faced 3 years ago.

I guess it is not surprising that a budget that fails to be serious about fiscal realities would fail to be serious about national security realities, but it is deeply concerning that the President doesn't seem to understand the importance of investing in our national defense.

President Biden has made the priorities of liberal interest groups the top priorities for his administration—whether that is canceling the Keystone XL's good-paying jobs and economic growth to please the environmental left or overturning the Mexico City policy so that taxpayer dollars can go to fund abortions overseas.

On the question of abortion, President Biden's budget abandons decades of bipartisan compromise and eliminates the Hyde amendment, which protects taxpayers from having their tax dollars used to fund abortions here at home. You would think that if we can't agree that the human rights of unborn children should be protected, we should at least agree that a taxpayer shouldn't be forced to pay for the killing of unborn children.

Almost 60 percent of Americans oppose using taxpayer dollars to pay for abortions, but President Biden has made it clear that his allegiance to the radical abortion left trumps the opinions of the American people. So his budget eliminates the Hyde amendment and imposes a number of other pro-abortion measures, like additional government funding access for the Nation's largest abortion provider, Planned Parenthood.

The Biden budget might be good news for liberal interest groups, but it is bad news for the American people and bad news for our country. I hope that my Democratic colleagues will think twice before forcing this massive government expansion onto the American people.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. PADILLA). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to complete my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Also without objection, it is so ordered.

NOMINATION OF REGINA M. RODRIGUEZ

Mr. BENNET. Mr. President, I wanted to come to the floor today to share a few words about Regina Rodriguez, President Biden's nominee for the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado. Gina's nomination comes to this floor with broad, well-earned support across the State of Colorado. My office has received a flood of letters on her behalf. All of them testify to her character, her hard work, and her commitment to service, justice, and the rule of law.

She learned all of it from her family. Her mom's family knew injustice firsthand. During the Second World War, they were relocated from California to the Heart Mountain internment site in Wyoming, joining over 10,000 people whose loyalty was questioned by the U.S. Government based solely on their Japanese ancestry.

Her mother Linda went on to become a teacher and administrator in the Denver public schools, my old school district. Her father Peter was a Mexican American who went from living in a railroad boxcar on the South Side of Chicago to earning a nomination for the NFL Hall of Fame.

Education and hard work transformed her parents' lives, and Regina has always sought to live up to their example. Gina grew up in Gunnison, CO, but her family moved around the country because her dad coached football. She graduated with honors from the University of Iowa, which I know is not the only reason Chairman GRASSLEY supported her nomination but probably was an important one, and then returned home to earn a J.D. from the University of Colorado Law School.

After starting at a private firm in Denver, Gina joined the U.S. Attorney's Office. The Department of Justice noticed her talent, and she went to work for the Attorney General on alternative dispute resolution—a new approach at the time meant to avoid lengthy trials through arbitration and mediation. She helped to mainstream the approach for all U.S. attorneys, saving the government countless hours and taxpayers' countless dollars over the years.

Gina's leadership in Washington earned her a promotion back in Denver, where she rose to become Chief of the Civil Division in the U.S. Attorney's Office. She was the first Latina to hold that position and quickly developed a stellar reputation among colleagues and judges.

Today, she is one of the most respected trial lawyers in Colorado and has received reward after reward for her work.

Her commitment to the community has been just as impressive. She is a founding board member of Colorado Youth at Risk, a nonprofit that helps kids stay on the right track. She served as one of Colorado's higher education commissioners and still serves

on the board of Denver's highest performing charter school, the School of Science and Technology in my old district. Somehow, she finds time to mentor young lawyers from underrepresented communities.

The evidence is overwhelming: Regina Rodriguez is an exceptional nominee with a distinguished career and commitment to service. She has blazed trails in Colorado and in Colorado law through the sheer force of her intellect, hard work, and character. Regina and her family are what we mean when we come to this floor and talk about the American dream.

She has my full and enthusiastic support, and I want to thank my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee for advancing her nomination with overwhelming, bipartisan support. They saw what Colorado already knows, which is what an exceptional judge Gina would make, and I wholeheartedly agree. I urge my colleagues to come together and confirm this outstanding nominee in a big bipartisan vote.

With that, I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Under the previous order, the question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Neals nomination?

Mr. CRAPO. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS) is necessarily absent.

The result was announced—yeas 66, nays 33, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 220 Ex.]

YEAS—66

Baldwin	Grassley	Peters
Bennet	Hassan	Portman
Blumenthal	Heinrich	Reed
Booker	Hickenlooper	Rosen
Brown	Hirono	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Schatz
Cantwell	Kaine	Schumer
Capito	Kelly	Shaheen
Cardin	Kennedy	Sinema
Carper	King	Smith
Casey	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Collins	Leahy	Tester
Coons	Lujan	Tillis
Cornyn	Manchin	Toomey
Cortez Masto	Markey	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Menendez	Warner
Durbin	Merkley	Warnock
Ernst	Murkowski	Warren
Feinstein	Murphy	Whitehouse
Fischer	Murray	Wicker
Gillibrand	Ossoff	Wyden
Graham	Padilla	Young